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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Posture in Housework"...Information from Extension specialists,
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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No question about it...you notice the woman who stands "tall". If she holds her head up...her chest up...her back straight...you notice her even though she doesn't measure five feet. It's because she has good posture.

We usually think of good posture in terms of standing straight. Standing tall as one man described it. But there's more to posture than the way you stand. Mr. Webster defines posture as the bearing of the body as a whole. Extension specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture describe good posture as using the body correctly.

If your housework makes your back ache...it may be that you need to improve your posture. Oftentimes back ache is due to poor posture.

Let's think...for just a minute...about some of the household jobs that tire you.

You stoop to pick up the papers.

You lift the baby from the crib.

You bend over the furniture to dust it.

You push the heavy furniture around on cleaning day.

You carry the basket of clothes out to the yard to hang them up.

You stretch beyond a comfortable reach to get the blanket from the top shelf.

Yes...housework is active work. But you're more able to take this active work in your stride...if you have good posture.

Here are some posture pointers you'll find helpful. They come from the Extension specialists.

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When you stand...make your bones carry the weight of your body. They're more likely to do this if you stand erect. When you sit...try to keep your back straight from the hips to the neck. When you bend...bend at the knees or hips...keep your back straight.

The Extension specialists say you can attain good posture in three ways: first ...by using your body correctly; second...by using the correct tool; and third... by having the correct working heights.

Here are some examples:

The baby's toddling across the room. He stumbles and falls. You stoop to pick him up. How can you spare your back? Simply by bending at the knees and the hips to get down to the baby. Keep your back straight.

If you're tall...you're likely to find yourself bending over the too-low sink every time you wash dishes.. If you can't have the sink raised...put a rack under the dishpan.

Try to place everything within easy reach and avoid muscle wrenches and strains. When you must reach for something on a high shelf...you'll save your energy if you'll take time to get a footstool so that you won't have to stretch beyond your reach.

Instead of carrying the basket of clothes when you hang them on the line... pull the basket around in your little boy's wagon...or use a laundry cart with wheels on it.

Good posture will help prevent a back ache. It will also help you get rid of nervous tensions and irritability. And finally...if you have good posture... you'll not only feel better...you'll look better. What more could a woman ask?

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